Book Review

CULTURE IN SECOND LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Culture as a Governing Principle in Second Language Pedagogy

Learning or teaching a second or foreign language is a nearly impossible task without addressing some fundamental issues related with the communityin which the language is used. Thebeliefs, worldview and presuppositions of second language learner, which play a crucial role in second or foreign language acquisition, are defined by his/her culture. The book edited by Eli Hinkel addresses the issue of impact of culture on second language learning. It underlines the point that whether it is interaction, speech, construction of meaning or writing in a second language, it bears the mark of culture.

The book is designed for applied linguists and language teachers. It is divided into three parts covering all major areas of dynamics of second language learning in relation to culture.The first part of the book comprisesthree chapters contributed by SuzanneScollon, James P. Lantolf, and LaurenceF. Bouton on Culture, Interaction, andLearning. The second part also has threechapters contributed by Yamuna Kachru,Eli Hinkel, and Linda Harklau on Cultureand Second Language Learning. The third part on Culture and Second Language Teaching Materials consists of the articles by Joan Kelly Hall, Elliot L. Judd, Kenneth R. Rose, Ron Scollon, Martin Cortazzi and Lixian Jin. Eli Hinkel's comprehensive introduction to the volume encompasses the research from other disciplines on the interaction between language and culture

Editor Eli Hinkel's introduction to the volume entitled Culture in Research and Second Language Pedagogy effectively initiates the argument concerning the impact of culture on second or foreign language learning. The editor briefly touches upon the recent studies that have contributed to our understanding of the relationship between culture and language like Boasian linguistics and research on Amer-indian languages, Sapir- Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, and the study of culture developed in the domains of anthropology and sociolinguistics. It substantiates the contributions of Greetz (cultural framework and conceptual world), Shweder and Gardener (culture theory), Hymes (communicative competence), Thomas (metapragmatic awareness) Gumperz (linguistically encoded social meanings), Kaplan (culture-specific rhetorical patterns), Hall (behavioral and cognitive constructs), Morain and Condon (behavioral and communicative paradigms) Damen (teachers as ethnographers), Moerman, de Bot, Ginsberg and Kramsch (language learning and interpretive principles and paradigms in learners' natal culture), Byram (hidden

curriculum), Buttjes (intercultural mediation), Gudykunst (notions of personhood) and Saville-Troike (socialization process). These are decisive in creating an awareness that 'behavior articulates culture and determines how language is used to express meaning:

As far as Part I of the book is concerned, it deals with the influence of culture on learning. In Chapter 1 (Not to waste words or students: Confucian and Socratic discourse in the tertiary classroom) of the Part I, Suzanne Scollon discusses the student's classroom behavior and teacher's expectations. By employing ethnographic approach to classroom interaction, she tries to show the difference between cultural constructs of China and those of the West regarding the goals of education. According to her, this difference shapes the behavior of students and teachers. She unearths the influence of philosophical precepts of Socrates and Confucius on behaviors and expectations of students and teachers. She draws on philosophical precepts of these great thinkers to prove the stress on the art of rhetoric as a search for knowledge and wisdom in Western classroom and the rhetorical reasoning in Chinese classroom, which indicate their relation with Socratic method of education and Confucian educational philosophy respectively.

James P. Lantolf deals with an important aspect of second language learning in Chapter 2 (Second Culture Acquisition: Cognitive Considerations) that 'second culture acquisition need not be restricted to social and attitudinal considerations, but that it can be investigated from the cognitive perspective as well: Along with establishing the close link between the conceptual thinking and the acquisition of lexical abstractions and generalizations, he succeeds in convincing us that only by immersing in the second culture can a learner develop ability of conceptual organization like native speakers. He points out that immersion in second culture helps learners to acquire new cultural constructs and models of meaning. He takes an overview of several experiments in this regard to illustrate that organization of concepts form the basis of perception of objects in different cultures and those concepts can be acquired with mixed success. He even proposes to examine the role of 'a wide variety of meditational tools, including gestures, image schemata, sound images, scripts, checklists, rituals, etc. with regard to their cognitive consequences for second culture acquisition.'

In Chapter 3 (Developing Nonnative Speaker Skills in Interpreting Conversational implicates in English: Explicit teaching can ease the process), pitching his point in the theories of interactional competence developed by Hymes and the conversational principles by H.P. Grice, Lawrence F. Bouton tries to explore the value of implied meanings in different cultures. He deals with learner's ability to interpret conversational implicates in various cultures. Through a longitudinal study he tries to find out whether nonnative users of language can extract the same implied meanings in English expressions like native speakers. He points at conversational implicates pose certain challenges before the nonnative speakers, but improvement is possible through instruction. He also studies the span of time needed bynonnative speakers to achieve the same level of competence in terms of knowledge and is their native speaker counterparts and believes that training can bridge up the gap yen the two. To substantiate his point, Bouton has used the results of several tests and pedagogical studies.

The focus of Part II of the book is on the influence of culture on writing in a second age. The investigation of this part is based on Robert Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric, which claims that rhetorical organization of text is determined by the thought patterns ofmembers of a particular culture. In principle, this theory has created awareness that a n text derives its cultural framework from different stylistic, religious, ethical and social is. The chapters in Part II deal with these aspects of culture and its impact on writing. In chapter 4 (Culture, Context and Writing), Yamuna Kachru throws light on pedagogical aims of Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric. She questions the use of contrastive rhetoric in the teaching ofnonnative speakers as it indicates the dominance of Anglo-American rhetorical paradigms. She also criticizes the expectation that writing should follow Aristotelian logic as it excludes the cultures other than Anglo-American. In Chapter 5 (Objectivity and Credibility in LI and L2 Academic Writing), Eli Hinkel compares rhetorical paradigms and objectivity conventions in Academic writing of native and nonnative users of language. According to her, even after many of language learning and exposure to L2 texts significant differences remain

between the writings of native and nonnative users of language. In Chapter 6 (Representing Culture ESL Writing Classroom) Linda Harklu draws our attention to how culture is treated in ESL classrooms. She deals with the linguistic proficiency and immersion in second culture migrant learners. She stresses the need to re-examine the normative expectations of rhetorical values and course contents while dealing with second language learners.

Part III of the book has five chapters, which address the issues in applied linguistic research to analyze the role of culture in teaching materials and methods. It makes the point thatfindings in applied linguistics can be used to enhance the interactional and pragmatic competence of second language learners. All the contributors to this section make efforts to raise the awareness of teacher and learner regarding the influence of culture in second language teaching and learning. Their approach to the issue appears to be based on Hymes notion of communicative competence and Austin's and Searle's speech act theory. All these chapters claim that second or foreign language teaching cannot be separated from the culture of its speakers. In Chapter 7 (A Prosaics of Interaction: The development of interactional competence in another language) of this part, Joan Kelly presents her method to develop learns pragmatic and interactional competence. She regards such competence as highly significant as it demands 'context-specific knowledge of interactive practices' on the part of a learner. She believes-that teacher's role is very important in making the learners competent :ants in a second culture. According to her, formal instruction by teachers can make s aware of 'behavior, pragmatically appropriate language use and interactionalmoves in another culture.' This chapter also offers guidelines for preparing instructional Is for second language learners. In Chapter 8 (Some Issues in the Teaching of Pragmatic .ence), Elliot L. Judd deals with second language pragmatics. He claims that commandover language does not guarantee successful communication. He stresses the need to create an understanding of second and foreign language pragma-linguistic norms. He cautions that inappropriate use of pragma-linguistic forms by nonnative speakers can result into negative consequences. Kenneth Rose tries to explain the use of linguistic research in developing pragmatic competence of second and foreign language learners in Chapter 9 (Teachers and Students Learning about Requests in Hong Kong). With the help of ethnographic data, he makes a point that requests can be linguistically and pragmatically complex. He offers a framework for developing learners' pragmatic competence. In chapter 10 (Cultural Codes for Calls: The use of commercial television in teaching culture in the classroom), Ron Scollon shows how television shows, which are easily available to teachers and learners, can be used in teaching contrastive and comparative analyses of cultural codes and even a second culture. According to him, it is teachers' responsibility to teach 'social interaction patterns, cultural values and at the same time to take into account the tension between students' cultural patterns and their own.' He emphasizes cultural-social-historical placement of teaching and learning within the society itself. Martin Cortazzi and Lixian]in discuss implicit representation of culture in EFL/ ESL teaching media methodologies in Chapter 11 (Cultural Mirrors: Materials and methods in the EFL classroom). They point out that culture ensigns not only instructional materials but also the dynamics of the teaching and learning processes. Their explanation that mere integration of second language teaching and the culture of its speakers is insufficient to develop intercultural competence is quite convincing. They stress the need to make teaching and learning a dialogue between the source culture and the target culture by grasping the significance of socialization process, internalization of roles and expectations. They analyze a variety of English language teaching materials to show influence of culture.